SPORT

Raonic announces retirement

MONTREAL: Canada's former world number three Milos Raonic announced his retirement from tennis at the age of 35 on Sunday after winning eight ATP tour titles and more than $20 million in prize money over a decade and a half on the circuit.

Notable for a powerful serve which earned him the nickname "Missile", Raonic's career peaked in 2016 when he reached the semis of the Australian Open and the final at Wimbledon, losing to Andy Murray in both contests.

"This is a moment you know will come one day, but somehow you never feel ready for it. This is as ready as I will ever be. Tennis has been my love and obsession for most of my life," Raonic wrote on X. "I have been the luckiest person to get to live out and fulfil my dreams. I got to show up every day and focus on just getting better."

Born in former Yugoslavia during the violent break-up of the country in the early 1990s, Raonic and his family moved to Canada when he was three.

He turned professional in 2008 and won his first ATP title at the Pacific Coast Championships three years later, beating Fernando Verdasco.

Raonic played in four Masters 1000 finals from 2013 to 2020 and lost them all, the first at the Canadian Open to Rafa Nadal and the other three to Novak Djokovic. —Reuters

Korir suspended

NAIROBI: Kenya's former New York marathon champion Albert Korir was provisionally suspended on Monday after testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug in the latest hit to the reputation of the country's running programme.

Korir, 31, tested positive for the synthetic form of erythropoietin that stimulates red blood cell production, the World Athletics Integrity Unit said.

He won the 2021 New York marathon in a time of 2:08:22, and came third in 2023 with a personal best time of 2:06:57, and he won the Ottawa marathon in 2019 and 2025.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said in October that Kenya had made "significant" progress in tackling doping but the country remains on a six-month probation while it seeks to improve its monitoring.

That month saw Ruth Chepngetich, the current world marathon record holder, banned for three years after admitting the useofHydrochlorothiazide, a banned diuretic used as a masking agent.

Running is a way out of poverty for many in Kenya, putting pressure on many to turn to drugs, especially since the country lacks the sophisticated infrastructure to train stars.—AFP

JEDDAH: Barcelona's Raphinha (L) scores against Real Madrid during the Spanish Super Cup final at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium.—Reuters

Flick hails Raphinha's mentality after Barca edge Real in heated Super Cup final

JEDDAH: Barcelona coach Hansi Flick commended Raphinha's mindset after the forward struck twice to help his team beat Real Madrid and retain the Spanish Super Cup on Sunday.

The Brazilian winger has seven goals in his last five matches, including a brace in the 3-2 win over Los Blancos in Saudi Arabia. Raphinha was out injured for around two months as Barca's form dipped in October and November, but has come back strongly.

"His mentality is unbelievable, his dynamic affects the whole team," Flick told reporters.

Raphinha missed a fine chance in the first half but almost immediately fired Barca into the lead in Jeddah. Then with the score tied at 2-2, the 29-year-old struck the winner from outside the area, with the help of a deflection.

"He missed the first chance but the second one, he was there and (scored) the first goal, and it gave the team more confidence," continued Flick. "This is what Raphinha brings on the pitch, it's a lot of intensity and we need this."

Barca won the Spanish Super Cup against Real Madrid last season on their way to claiming a domestic treble.

Flick said he hoped the victory would help the La Liga leaders achieve their other ambitions this season.

"We are in a good mood, we have a lot of confidence now," said Flick, after Barca's 10th consecutive victory across all competitions. "This final was very important for us because against Real Madrid it's always something special. Again we won a final, and this is fantastic."

The match at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium turned into a thriller, with four goals packed into a breathless phase at the end of the first half.

After an even opening spell, Barcelona gradually asserted control before the interval, and were rewarded in the 36th minute when Raphinha burst into the box and drilled a low shot into the far corner to give his side the lead.

Xabi Alonso's Real struck back in the second minute of first-half stoppage time when Vinicius Jr collected the ball near the halfway line, surged down the flank, skipped past two Barcelona defenders and finished into the far corner in a stunning solo effort.

The first-half drama was far from over and two minutes later Robert Lewandowski was given space in the penalty area and finished with a delicate chip to restore Barca's lead, only for the chaos to continue moments before the interval.

From a Real corner, Raphinha made a goal-line clearance, but Gonzalo Garcia pounced on the rebound, with the ball striking both the bar and the post before crossing the line, bringing the sides level once more as the teams went into the break.

Raphinha struck again for Barca in the 73rd minute after drifting into a dangerous position on the edge of the box. Slipping slightly as he pulled the trigger, his shot took a deflection off a Real defender, wrong-footed keeper Thibaut Courtois and went into the net.

As the clock ticked past 90 minutes, the temperature on the pitch rose again when Barcelona were reduced to 10 men after Frenkie de Jong was sent off for a foul on Kylian Mbappe.

Real pressed hard but failed to make their numerical advantage count, going agonisingly close when efforts from close range by Alvaro Carreras and Franco Mastantuono were both kept out by goalkeeper Joan Garcia to give Barcelona their 16th Super Cup title, with the defeat likely to bring back recent doubts around Real coach Alonso's future.

"Whatever way you lose it hurts, but it's clear that this was a very even game, hotly competed, with a bit of everything," Alonso told Movistar. "We were very close to equalising, we fought it out until the end and I have to congratulate Barca."—Agencies

Bayern fire eight past Wolfsburg to stretch lead at top

MUNICH: Bayern Munich, helped by two record-breaking VfL Wolfsburg own goals and two from man-of-the-match Michael Olise, demolished the visitors 8-1 in the Bundesliga on Sunday to extend their lead at the top.

The reigning champions, who are undefeated in the league this season, are on 44 points, 11 ahead of second-placed Borussia Dortmund. RB Leipzig, with a game in hand, are third on 29, as many as Bayer Leverkusen and fifth-placed VfB Stuttgart.

"It's not normal [for such a result], it's not a given and we should not forget that," Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said. "The first half was really not easy. But I had the feeling that when they get a bit tired, we'd create even more chances and that's exactly what happened in the second half."

The hosts did not need long to take the lead when Luis Diaz's cutback was turned in by Wolfsburg's Kilian Fischer for an own goal in the fifth minute. It was the third consecutive league game that Wolfsburg had scored an own goal, setting a Bundesliga record.

The visitors, however, reacted well with Dzenan Pejcinovic finishing a fine passing move that split open the Bayern defence, to level in the 15th.

Diaz turned scorer on the half-hour mark, heading in an Olise cross for his ninth league goal of the campaign, to put the hosts back in front. Olise is the league's best provider with nine assists so far.

The Frenchman then got on to the scoresheet with a curled shot to bag his eighth goal of the season before hapless Wolfsburg notched up their fourth own goal in the last three league matches in the 53rd with Moritz Jenz putting the ball in the net from an Olise cutback.

MUNICH: Michael Olise of Bayern Munich scores during the Bundesliga match against VfL Wolfsburg at the Allianz Arena.—Reuters

The hosts, who also hit the post with Olise in the 64th and added two more goals through substitute Raphael Guerreiro and Bundesliga leading scorer Harry Kane in a span of 80 seconds, have never lost at home to Wolfsburg in the Bundesliga, having won 27 of 29 matches and drawn two.

Olise crowned his superb performance in his 50th Bundesliga match for Bayern with his second goal of the evening in the 76th before substitute Leon Goretzka flicked the ball in from a tight angle in the 88th to make it their biggest win over Wolfsburg.

Earlier on Sunday, Haris Tabakovic bagged a brace as Borussia Moenchengladbach cruised to a 4-0 home win over Augsburg.—Agencies

SNGPL down State Bank in President's Trophy

KARACHI: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) returned to winning ways as the third round of the President's Trophy concluded on Friday, registering a 48-run victory over State Bank of Pakistan at the State Bank Stadium.

SNGPL required just seven balls on the fourth morning to wrap up the contest, claiming the last two wickets for five runs to complete a comfortable win after having suffered an eight-wicket defeat against Wapada in the previous round.

Resuming at 33 not out, overnight batter Qasim Akram was dismissed for 37 off 58 balls as Shehzad Gul completed a superb match haul, finishing with career-best first-class figures of 11-91. The left-arm pacer had Qasim caught to add a sixth wicket to his second-innings tally.

With the win, SNGPL moved to second place on the points table with 59 points, behind leaders Wapda, while PTV are placed third with 49 points after three rounds.

Meanwhile, the match between Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) ended in a draw at the NBP Sports Complex. Chasing a target of 275, KRL were 82 for two in 22 overs when the teams agreed to call off play.

Left-handed opener Shahzaib Khan remained unbeaten on 45 off 63 balls, hitting five fours and two sixes, after KRL had slipped to 31 for two with OGDCL sensing an opening. Imran Rafiq, who made 10 not out off 43 balls, ensured there were no further alarms.

Earlier, OGDCL's Mohammad Sarwar Afridi completed his third first-class century, scoring 115 off 175 balls with nine fours and three sixes. Resuming from an overnight 90, Sarwar anchored the innings as OGDCL, who began the day at 199 for four with a lead of 96, added 178 runs for the remaining six wickets to post 377 in 120.5 overs.

Danish Aziz (70 off 97 balls, eight fours and two sixes), captain Adil Amin (55 off 133 balls, four fours) and Mohammad Imran (25 off 66 balls) also made useful contributions. For KRL, Arshad Iqbal claimed four for 57, while Ahmed Bashir picked up three wickets.

After three rounds, KRL and OGDCL are placed fourth and fifth on the table with 43 and 37 points respectively, having won one match each. —Sports Reporter

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ: Lyon's Endrick (L) is tackled by Thomas Meunier of Lille during their French Cup round-of-32 match at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.—AFP

Endrick opens Lyon account

PARIS: Real Madrid loanee Endrick scored his first goal for Olympique Lyonnais as he netted the winner at Lille in their round of 32 French Cup match on Sunday.

The Brazilian 19-year-old Endrick tucked home a tidy poacher's finish to hand Lyon a 2-1 on his debut in the north of France.

The match started in frantic fashion as Afonso Moreira flicked a long punt forward past Lille goalkeeper Arnaud Bodart to prod Lyon into the lead 49 seconds after the referee had signalled the start of the match.

Nathan Ngoy levelled for the hosts two minutes before the half-hour after Lyon failed to clear the danger and Hakon Haraldsson took advantage to tee up the defender.

Against the run of play heading into half-time, Endrick showed why Spanish giants Real Madrid splashed out a reported 47.5 million euros ($55.9 million) for his services in 2024 as he ghosted in at the back post to clinically slot home a Corentin Tolisso flick-on and seal Lyon's place in the last 16.

Elsewhere, struggling Nice beat fellow Ligue 1 side Nantes 5-3 on penalties after their tie finished one-apiece.

Montpellier won 4-0 at Metz and Rennes beat fourth-tier Chantilly 3-1.

Le Mans advanced with a 4-1 shoot-out victory following their stalemate with Nancy.—AFP

McTominay double earns Napoli draw with leaders Inter

MILAN: Scott McTominay scored a double as defending champions Napoli twice came from behind to earn a 2-2 draw with Serie A leaders Inter Milan at the San Siro on Sunday.

Inter came close to gaining revenge for their 3-1 defeat in Naples earlier this season and a win would have opened up a commanding gap at the top but Napoli's never-say-die attitude keeps them very much in the title race.

Inter move to 43 points, three ahead of second-placed AC Milan who drew 1-1 with Fiorentina earlier on Sunday, while Napoli are third in the standings on 39 points, level with AS Roma in fourth.

"We played a solid game and remained focused," Napoli captain Giovanni Di Lorenzo told reporters. "We're happy with this draw because it came after going behind twice."

NAPOLI'S Scott McTominay shoots to score against Inter Milan during their Serie A match at the San Siro Stadium.—Reuters

Following some early Napoli pressure Inter took the lead in the ninth minute after Marcus Thuram drove forward before laying off a pass to Federico Dimarco in the area who drilled his low shot into the far corner from a wide angle.

Inter began to press high up the pitch, but Napoli drew level in the 26th minute. Leonardo Spinazzola's pass sent Eljif Elmas into the area and his low cross into the six-yard box was met by McTominay who got ahead of his marker Manuel Akanji at the near post to fire past Yann Sommer.

Napoli had chances after the interval and were left ruing those misses when Inter were awarded a penalty for Amir Rrahmani's foul on Henrikh Mkhitaryan, with Napoli boss Antonio Conte shown a red card for his furious reaction to the referee's decision.

Hakan Calhanoglu blasted his spot kick in off the upright in off the post past penalty specialist Vanja Milinkovic-Savic and Inter retook the lead with 17 minutes remaining.

Napoli, however, refused to bow, and it was McTominay who again equalised with nine minutes left, deftly volleying home his fifth league goal of the season from Noa Lang's hooked cross.

For Inter it was another missed opportunity in a big match, with just one point collected from their four fixtures played against Napoli, Milan and fifth-placed Juventus.

That is a worrying trend ahead of key Champions League clashes with Arsenal and Borussia Dortmund coming up later this month.

"We should have done better on both goals but you have to recognise the quality of the opposition because they have great players," said Inter defender Alessandro Bastoni. "In any case I'm happy with what we've done in the first half of the season, because I remember what was said about us at the start of the year."

MILAN SLIP AT FIORENTINA

Christopher Nkunku lashed home Milan's leveller in the 90th minute at the Stadio Artemio Franchi to deny Fiorentina just a third win of a troubled season.

Fiorentina had looked set for the points after Pietro Comuzzo headed home the opener in the 66th minute, but Nkunku's late strike left the Tuscans on 14 points in 18th place.

The hosts came close to nabbing all three points twice in stoppage time, with new signing Marco Brescianini hitting the bar from close range and Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan having to dive at the feet of Moise Kean to stop the Italy striker from netting the winner.

"We played well in the first half and created a lot of chances that we failed to convert," said Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri to DAZN. "We're second in the league and we need to keep it up, but we also need to be more clinical when we're dominating play."

Fiorentina are two points behind Genoa who sit just outside the relegation zone and host Cagliari on Monday evening.

Paolo Vanoli's team seem to have turned a corner with one defeat in their last five matches, and fans are back onside after long periods of protest at bad results and a lack of direction behind the scenes.

Supporters applauded Fiorentina off the field after a second match in succession in which they were pegged back late on, a last-gasp Pedro penalty costing them a win at Lazio on Wednesday. —Agencies